بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وإذا سألتموهن متاعا فاسألوهن من وراء حجاب

HIJAB

The Islamic Commandments of Hijab

Dr. Mohammed Ismail Memon Madani

English Translation

Dr. Mohammed Sadiq

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First and foremost, I thank Allah (s.w.t.) for His Mercy and Guidance in this work. I also wish to thank Dr. Mohammed Ismail Memon Madani for his inspiration and encouragement in translating this book. He was also kind enough to review the entire book and suggest valuable changes before it was published. I would also like to thank Maulana Ibrahim Memon and Brother M. A. Qazi for their assistance in correcting the translation of various terms and proper nouns. I am thankful as well to Mrs. Noman for helping me in the translation of chapter four of this book and all the brothers and sisters who read the manuscript and suggested vaulable changes. Last but not least, I would like to thank my family, especially my sons Irfan and Javaid Tawheed who have assisted me every step of the way in this work. May Allah be pleased with them.

Mohammed Sadiq

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

All Praise be to Allah; we praise and seek Guidance from Him; we have Faith in Him and we place our trust in Him. We seek the Protection of Allah from the evil of our Nafs and our deeds. May He shower Salat and Salam on our beloved Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and on his family and his Companions.

I have made every attempt to use simple and contemporary English in the translation of this book. However, there were many times where a simple English word could not be found to convey the meaning and, therefore, either the original word in Urdu or Arabic was retained with a footnote explaining its meaning, or a word from old English was substituted.

I also edited the book leaving out some parts from the original text which was repetitious. These editorial changes were reviewed and approved by the author of the original book, Dr. Mohammed Ismail Memon Madani.

My main objective in translating this book was to provide my Muslim brothers and sisters and our youth living in North America and other Western countries with an authentic peace of work in the English language on the necessity of Hijab so that they could read it themselves and appreciate the wisdom behind these golden Commandments of Islam.

May Allah (﷾)accept this work and make it useful for those who truly desire to learn and practice Islam in their lives.

Dr. Mohammed Sadiq
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
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بسم ا الرحمن الرحيم

INTRODUCTION

There are many issues where there have not been any differences of opinion among the Muslim Ummah since the beginning of Islam. In fact, there has been an almost complete consensus on these issues. But, these are the days of “reform”. “Freedom from old traditions” seems to have become the motto. Attempts are being made to approve and accept as lawful everything that was forbidden in Islam. Many consented matters are being presented as controversial. One such issue is that of Hijab . One hears claims from everywhere that there is no Commandment in Islam about Hijab. Some present inaccurate translations of the Holy Verses in this regard. Others bring forth uncommon interpretations of the Qur'anic Verses about Hijab. Still others refute the Ahadith in this respect.

In western countries non-Islamic ideologies are more prevalent than Islamic education. The literature about Islam found in these countries has been written mostly by Christians and Jews, or by those so-called Muslims who have been heavily influenced by western education, or have obtained degrees in Islamic Education under the training of Jews and Christians. They, therefore, view the holy Qur'an and Ahadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) through their coloured glasses. As a result, they themselves go astray and lead others on the wrong path as well. Doubts are being created about the Commandments of Hijab also.

Hijab, with its established limits, is a Divine Law and Guidance based on the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions (Ahadith) of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the interpretations of these by the Islamic jurists as well as on the practices of our pious predecessors. It is on these bases that it has been

practiced continuously at all times by the Muslim Ummah. It is not something fictitious that was contrived by people and given the status of Islamic Law in Muslim societies based on cultural practices. Such is not the case, nor is it befitting to expect from a comprehensive, complete and protected Divine Constitution of Islam that has no room for any modifications. But, for sometime now, people are going to extremes in its practices and beliefs. Consequently, doubts have been raised in people's minds about the legal status and the basic truth about the Hijab, and it has become the target of questions and doubts.

Under the influence of western civilization, the practice of women going about without Hijab has resulted in reactionary and extreme points of views about it. This has caused further doubts about its principles and its legal limits. On the one hand, the legal limits of Hijab are claimed to be the results of conservatism of Islamic scholars and, instead of simply choosing not to observe Hijab for oneself, people are made to believe that bringing women out in the open is the need of the day as well as the objective of the Divine Law. On the other hand, pointing out the legitimate flexibility in the Divine Law about Hijab is considered heresy. This has gone on to the point where the traditional and cultural limits imposed on women are also being incorporated in the Divine Law.

It is, therefore, necessary to present the true teachings of the holy Qur'an and the Ahadith on this matter. May Allah give us the true understanding of the Divine Law and the courage to practice it.

In the end, I would like to thank my dear sons Mohammed Mansoor and Mohammed Ibrahim, who truly proved to be my hands and arms in writing this book. I am also thankful to my dear friend Maulana Mohammed Abdul Moez who reviewed the transcript and suggested vaulable changes

which have made the book better organized and more beneficial. May Allah (ﷻ) enrich their knowledge and accept them in the service of His Din, and bless them with success of this world and of the world hereafter.

NOTE: These days the word Hijab is often translated in English as Head Scarf, which is not in accordance with its meaning and intent in the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith. It is, therefore, misleading. The correct translation is “Something that covers and conceals completely”.

Dr. Mohammed Ismail Memon Madani
Zilqadah 26, 1410H
June 20, 1990

CHAPTER ONE

EVIDENCE FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

The rules and regulations governing the relationship and socialization between men and women are those basics in any human civilization which, when violated, result in the destruction of the entire society. This may be readily witnessed in various times in the history of human civilization. Hence, Allah (ﷻ) has spoken in the Holy Qur'an in detail on this topic providing clear boundaries. For example, men and women have been asked to lower their gazes; women have been asked not to engage in sweet talk with men; and the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) were asked to talk to the wives of the Prophet from behind a curtain if they needed to ask anything from them.

THE VERSE OF HIJAB

The scholars of the Holy Qur'an agree that the command-ment regarding Hijab for women was revealed in the following verse of Surah Ahzab, which is why this verse is also known as the verse of Hijab.

1.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرَ
نَاظِرِينَ إِنَاهُ وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلا مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ
لِحَدِيثٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذِي النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَحْيِي مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لا يَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ
وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ
وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلا أَنْ تَنْكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
أَبَدًا إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا   (الاحزاب، ٥٣)

“O you who Believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses until permission is given to you for a meal, (and then) not (so early as) to wait for its preparation; but when you are invited, enter; and when you have taken your meal, disperse without seeking vain talk. Such (behavior) annoys the Prophet; he is ashamed to dismiss you, but Allah (ﷻ) is not ashamed (to tell you) the truth. And when you ask (his wives) for anything you want, ask them from behind a screen (Hijab); that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs. Nor is it right for you that you should annoy Allah's Messenger, or that you should marry his widows after him at any time. Truly such a thing is in Allah's Sight an enormity.” (33:53)

In the above verse, we find some etiquettes and commandments of the Islamic way of life pertaining to:

1. Invitations for meals and the conduct of guests.
2. Hijab for women, and
3. Marriage with the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) after his demise.

Since #1 and #3 above are not part of our topic, I will present the details of #2.

In this verse of Surah Ahzab, Hijab was mandated for women. Women were not required to observe Hijab before the revelation of this verse.

There is consensus among the scholars of the Holy Qur'an that although the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) were particularly addressed in this verse, the commandment is meant for all women. The same style of providing guidance is found in many other places in the Holy Qur'an. For example, Allah (ﷻ) says in Surah Talaq:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعِدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ (الطـلاق ؟١)

"O Prophet (ﷺ), when you do divorce women, divorce them at their prescribed periods." (65:1)

Clearly, not divorcing women in their prescribed periods ('Iddat) and waiting until they are clean, was not meant only for the Prophet (ﷺ) and his wives, but all Muslim men and women are bound by this Divine Law. Similarly, in the above verse of Surah Ahzab, although the address is specific to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), the commandment is meant for all Muslim women. The biggest proof of this is the reason Allah (ﷻ) stated for this command in this verse - ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ "...that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs." This clearly means that immodesty (going without Hijab) breeds filth and indecency in hearts. Undoubtedly, the common Muslim men and women are more in need of protecting themselves from this filth and indecency since they are more liable to engage in such sinful activities.

It is also noteworthy here that the women, who have been addressed in this verse of Hijab, were the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) for whom Allah (ﷻ) Himself took the responsibility to ensure the purity and cleanliness of their hearts. This has been mentioned in the same Surah.

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا (الاحـزاب، ٣٣)

.... (Allah (ﷻ) wishes) to remove all abomination from you and your family members, and to make you pure and spotless. (33:33)

On the other hand, the men were those respectable Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), many of whom were ahead of the angels in their status. When such pious people of the earlier days of Islam were bound by the commandments of Hijab, the people of later ages would be even more in need of them since the impulsiveness, egocentricity, and sexual freedom will continuously increase as the Day of Judgment comes closer. Who among us can claim that our self-control is better than that of the respectable Companions of the Prophet; that our women are more pious than the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ); and that there is no danger of corruption today in men and women mixing freely with each other.

In the interpretation of this verse, Hafiz Ibn Kathir writes:

Muslims were forbidden from entering the houses of the Prophet (ﷺ) as they used to enter each other's houses without permission in the days before Islam. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) chose modesty and honor for this Ummah and commanded them to observe Hijab. Undoubtedly, this commandment is in respect and honor of this Ummah. (Tafsir Ibn Kathir)

‘Allamah Ibn ‘Arabi writes in his interpretation:

Although the three commandments in this verse, i.e., entering the house of the Prophet (ﷺ) after permission, not engaging in idle talk after the meal, and observing Hijab between men and the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), were revealed specifically for the houses of the Prophet and his wives, these are binding for all Muslims as we are required to follow the guidance and the tradition of the Prophet (ﷺ). Unless, of course, if Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) Himself specifies that a particular rule is meant only for the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Ummah is not subjected to it, which is not the case here. (Ahkam-ul-Qur'an, vol. 5, p. 342)

Imam Qurtubi writes:

This verse provides the permission to ask, from behind a screen (Hijab), the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) for any necessary thing, including any matters of religion. And, all Muslim women would be bound by the same rule. Besides this verse, other principles of the Islamic doctrine also tell us that a woman (for her honour) deserves to be hidden - her body as well as her voice. (Tafsir-e-Qurtubi, vol. 14, p. 227)

CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE REVELATION OF THE ABOVE VERSE

A number of circumstances have been stated surrounding the Revelation of the above verse. These are not contradictory. It is likely that all those circumstances together resulted in this Revelation. Ibn Abi Hatim narrated from Salman Bin Arqam (رضي الله عنه), that the first part of the verse, dealing with the etiquettes of invitations for meal, was revealed about those unruly people who showed up uninvited at meal times and waited until the meal was served.

Imam ‘Abd Bin Hamid has narrated from Anas (رضي الله عنه) that these people used to wait for the meal time and then went to the house of the Prophet (ﷺ) and sat talking among themselves until the meal was served so that they could join in. The first two verses were revealed to guide such people. These types of incidents occurred before the commandments about Hijab were revealed when men used to go freely into the houses of other people and their private quarters.

There are two narrations by Imam Bukhari regarding the circumstances surrounding the Revelation of the commandments about Hijab.

One has been narrated by Anas (رضي الله عنه) that ‘Umar Bin Khattab (رضي الله عنه) said to the Prophet (ﷺ): "O Prophet of Allah!, you receive all kinds of people at your home - good and bad; it would be better if you ask your wives to observe Hijab." Accordingly, this verse of Hijab was revealed.

There is a narration both in Bukhari and Muslim where ‘Umar Faruq (رضي الله عنه) had said: My Lord agreed with me in three things: **1.** I said, "O Allah's Apostle! I wish we took the station of Prophet Ibrahim as our praying place (for some of our prayers)"; so came the Divine Inspiration: وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى "And take you (people) the station of Prophet Ibrahim as a place of prayer." (2:125) **2.** And as regards the (verse of) the veiling of women, I said, "O Allah's Apostle! I wish you ordered your wives to cover themselves from the men because both the good and bad ones talk to them"; so the verse of Hijab for women was revealed. **3.** Once the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) became envious of each other (for the attention he gave to one of them) and banded together against him, and I said to them, "It may be if he [the Prophet (ﷺ)] divorced you (all) that his Lord (Allah) will give him, instead of you, wives better than you"; so a verse was revealed in exactly the same words.

There is another narration from Anas (رضي الله عنه) in Bukhari: Narrated Anas Bin Malik (رضي الله عنه): .....I knew about the Order of Al-Hijab (veiling of ladies) more than any other person when it was revealed. It was revealed for the first time when Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) had consummated his marriage with Zainab Bint Jahsh (رضي الله عنها). When the day dawned, the Prophet was a bridegroom and he invited the people to a banquet; so they came, ate, and then left, all except a few who remained with the Prophet for a long time. The Prophet got up and went out, and I too went out with him so that those people might leave too. The Prophet proceeded and so did I till he

came to the threshold of ‘Aishah's dwelling place. Then thinking that those people might have left, he returned and so did I along with him and behold, they were still sitting and had not gone. So the Prophet again walked away and I walked along with him. When we reached the threshold of ‘Aishah's dwelling place he thought that they had left, and so he returned and I too returned along with him and found those people had left. Then the verse of Hijab was revealed يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ ... (which he recited to me), and drew a curtain between me and him.

COMMANDMENT FOR WOMEN TO STAY HOME

To protect the chastity of women and to maintain the moral character of a society, the most important factor is to minimize free contact between men and women. The best way to ensure this is for women not to leave their homes unnecessarily. Their excessive outings and coming in contact with (Ghair-Mahram) men result in severe temptations, which is clearly evident in past and present ignorant societies. This is why the Holy Qur'an specifically commanded women to stay in their homes. Allah (ﷻ) says in Surah Ahzab, verses 32-33:

2.

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلا مَعْرُوفًا ه وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الأولَى وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا (الاحزاب، ٣٣-٣٢)

“O Consorts of the Prophet! You are not like any of the (other) women; if you do fear (Allah), be not too complaisant of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease

should be moved with desire; but speak you a speech (that is) just. And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance; and establish regular Prayer and give regular charity (Zakat); and obey Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger. And Allah (ﷻ) only wishes to remove all abomination from you, you Members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless." (33:32-33)

Two important commandments become clear from the above verses.

First, that women should not talk to (Ghair-Mahram) men unnecessarily or in a soft and sweet tone of voice, but rather in a straight forward and honorable manner, so that no one will misinterpret them or have any bad thoughts about them.

Imam Qurtubi writes in the interpretation of this verse:

Allah (ﷻ) has commanded Muslim women to talk in a straight forward and concise manner with (Ghair-Mahram) men. The tone of their voice should be devoid of softness and sweetness unlike the street women and uncivilized women of olden days who used to sweet talk men. A woman should be very careful while talking to (Ghair-Mahram) men even if they are members of her in-laws. She should speak in a firm voice without being loud. (Qurtubi, vol. 14, pp. 177-78)

Mufti Muhammad Shafi' writes in his interpretation:

فَلا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ means that even when it becomes necessary to talk to the (Ghair-Mahram) men, a woman should avoid the soft and attractive tone of voice which is part of her nature. What this means is that she should not speak in a way that might charm or attract the listener. As Allah (ﷻ)

said: فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ "...be not too complaisant of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire." Disease here refers to hypocrisy (Nifaq), total or partial. The true hypocrite (Munafiq) would indeed be expected to behave in such a manner, but some times one, who is otherwise a true believer, may also have an inclination towards the forbidden (Haram) which is also part of hypocrisy. A person, who has true Faith, can never be inclined towards the forbidden (Haram).

The main objective of this first part of the commandment is for women to acquire such a state of Hijab and an avoidance of (Ghair-Mahram) men that those of weak faith may not have any hope, or greed of any favours, from them. After this verse was revealed, some of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) used to cover their mouth with their hands to hide their natural voice while talking to strangers. 'Amer Bin 'As narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ):

أن النبي صلي الله عليه وسلم نهى أن تكلم النساء إلا بإذن أزواجهن (الطبراني)

"Indeed the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited women to talk (to Ghair-Mahram men) without the permission of their husbands." (Tabrani)

The second important part of this commandment states that the best way for women to observe Hijab is to stay in their homes and not to come out without a valid necessity. Observing Hijab in this manner is known as Hijab Bil Buyut (observing Hijab by way of staying home).

Also apparent from this verse, is that women are created in a way that they can be contented and at peace only by staying within their houses, occupying themselves with home and family matters. The welfare and prosperity of the society

also depends on this. A woman's physical nature is not well suited for working outside the home like men to earn a living, and to face all the severe hardships associated with it, which only men have been equipped to deal with. This is why, in Islam, women have not been made responsible to earn a living. Her parents and brothers carry the responsibility to meet her material needs before her wedding, which is passed on to her husband after her marriage. This clearly shows how often Islam wants women to come out of their homes.

Another part of this verse, "...and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance...", tells us that before Islam, women used to roam about without Hijab freely, shamelessly and without any controls. Therefore, the earlier Interpreters of the Holy Qur'an interpreted these verses in light of the traditions of the former Times of Ignorance. When one reads those interpretations and compares them with the ignorance of the present times, it appears that today people have become even more ignorant than the men in those ancient times.

Mujahid and Qatadah say that the word Tabarruj in this verse means walking in a lewd way. Muqatil states that Tabarruj is when a woman only covers her head with her scarf without covering her neck and chest. Mubarrad says that Tabarruj is when a woman reveals her physical attractiveness which she is required to hide. Lais states that Tabarruj is when a woman does not hide the beauty of her face and her physical shape and considers it good to reveal it. Abu ‘Ubaidah (﵁) says Tabarruj is when a woman exhibits her beauty and her body in a way as to cause sexual excitement in men. ‘Allamah Ibn Jauzi, after quoting the above statements, writes: I believe that coming out of her house and roaming about the streets in itself is sufficient to cause trouble, let alone exhibiting her beauty and her body. (Ahkamun-Nisa')

All of the above things, explained by the earlier interpreters under the definition of Tabarruj, are prevalent today. The daughters of the Muslim society today, with a few exceptions, have even gone far beyond. This is despite the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) has said:

شرالنساءالمتبرحات وهن المنافقات لايدخل الجنته منهن الا مثل الغراب الأعصم (سنن بيهقى)

"The worse among the women are those who freely leave their homes without Hijab. They are hypocrites and few of these will enter paradise." (Sunan Al-Baihaqi)

It is to dissipate this Tabarruj that the Prophet (ﷺ), while accepting women in Islam, used to make them promise not to engage in Tabarruj. (Tabrani).

From the word Tabarruj in the above verse, it is also clear that if it is necessary for a woman to leave her house, she has to hide her beauty. This can be achieved by wearing a Burqa' or Jalbab that covers her entire body.

The advocates of women's freedom often object that the commandments of Hijab in this verse are only meant for the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), who are the subjects of this verse, and, therefore, do not apply to all women.

In fact, if one reads the complete verse, it is clear that none of the five commandments in this verse are limited only to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ). Even the commandments in the verses before and after it are also applicable to all Muslim women. In this verse, the first commandment is about the etiquette of speaking with Ghair-Mahram, then for women to stay in their homes, then to establish the Salat, then to pay the Zakat, and finally to obey Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). Now, who can claim that the commandments

related to Salat, Zakat and obedience of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) in this verse are also meant only for the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) and that the rest of the women are exempt from these?

The truth is that these commandments are meant for all Muslim women, although apparently the first subjects of this verse were the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ). This has occurred in the Qur'an in many places where the initial address is specific to a person, but the commandment is applicable to all. Imam Abu Bakr Jassas writes in the interpretation of this verse:

This verse provides a clear argument that women are required to stay in their homes and it is forbidden for them to leave their homes... And all the etiquettes in this verse were taught to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) to safeguard their chastity. All Muslim women are required to follow these commandments. (Jassas, vol. 5, p. 230)

‘Allamah Ibn Kathir writes:

These are the etiquettes Allah (ﷻ) taught the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) and since all the women of Muslim Ummah are required to follow their example, these commandments are applicable to all Muslim women. (Ibn Kathir, vol. 3, p. 483)

Besides, Allah (ﷻ) confirmed the purity and chastity of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) in an entire Ruku‘ of the Qur'an, clearly stating:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا (الاحزاب، ٣٣)

Allah (﷿) only wishes to remove all abomination from you, you Members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless. (33:33)

When Allah (﷿) Himself confirmed their purity and chastity, can anyone expect them to engage in sweet talk with men while explaining to them matters of religion? When such a thing is not even thinkable, why then did Allah (﷿) give them these specific commandments? The answer is that Allah (﷿) wanted them to be aware of the natural attraction in a woman's voice and to make a conscious effort to change it with harshness while talking to men so that even this natural delicacy will not become apparent to Ghair-Mahram.

The following things are noteworthy here:

1. The wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) possess a high status among women. They were cleansed and purified by Allah. No one could even think of them indulging in any sinful activities.

2. و أزواجه أمهاتهم "They are the Mothers of the Ummah as Allah," proclaimed in Surah Ahzab, verse 6.

3. This proclamation was not merely out of respect for them, but as with real mothers, it was forbidden to marry any of them after the demise of the Prophet (ﷺ). Allah (﷿) said:

وَلا أَنْ تَنْكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا
(الاحزاب،٥٣)

"....Nor that you should ever marry his widows after him at any time. Indeed that would be an enormity in the sight of Allah." (33:53)

4.People who spoke to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) were none other than the Companions whose piety Allah (ﷻ) Himself confirmed in the Qur'an saying: رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ "These are the ones who are happy with Me and I am happy with them (98:8)." Also: وَكُلا وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْحُسْنَى "...And all of them we forgave..." (57:10)

5.The conversations between the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Companions were nothing more than teaching and learning the matters of religion.

Despite the above facts, Allah (ﷻ) commanded the Consorts of the Prophet (ﷺ) to observe Hijab, and commanded the Companions to talk to them from behind a screen. Then, it is not difficult to see how important it would be for men and women to follow these commandments in this day and age.

BURQA‘ OR JALBAB

In the last verse, Muslim women were asked not to leave their homes without necessity. If they must, they should not go out boldly without Hijab like the women of the olden Days of Ignorance. Further, in Surah Ahzab, Allah (ﷻ) commanded them to use Jalbab when they came out of their homes:

3.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

(الاحزاب،٥٣)

"O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters, and the believing women that they should cast (Yudnina 'Alaihinna) their outer garments (Jalabib) over them; so that it is likelier that they will be known and not harmed; and Allah (﷾) is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (33:59)

This verse is a very important one among the verses revealed about Hijab, because it clearly states that hiding one's face is included in the commandment of Hijab. Therefore, the scholars and Interpreters of the Holy Qur'an have discussed this issue at great length.

Secondly, since this verse is not specifically addressed only to the Consorts of the Prophet (ﷺ), there is no room to make excuses regarding its applicability to all women.

Let us look at the literal meaning of the words *Jalbab* and *Yudnina 'Alaihinna* in this verse.

WHAT IS JALBAB?

Jalabib is the plural form of the word Jalbab. Many different interpretations have been made in explaining Jalbab. In his research of this word, 'Allamah Ibn Al-Manzur concludes:

Jalbab is actually the outer sheet or coverlet which a woman wraps around on top of her garments to cover herself from head to toe. It hides her body completely. (Lisan-ul Arab, vol. 1, p. 273)

The root word is *Jalbab* which is basically used for such things which completely cover something. For example, the blankets we use in cold weather or the darkness of the night which covers all things completely.

The word Jalbab is therefore used for that outer sheet which a woman wraps around on top of her clothes to hide herself from the eyes of strangers.

In interpreting the word, ‘Allamah Ibn Al-Hazam writes:

In Arabic language, the language of the Prophet (ﷺ), Jalbab is that outer sheet which covers the entire body. A piece of cloth which is too small to cover the entire body could not be called Jalbab. (Al-Muhalla, vol. 3, p. 217)

In describing it, Ibn Mas‘ud (رضي الله عنه) said that Jalbab is that sheet of cloth which is worn on top of the scarf. Ibn ‘Abbas (رضي الله عنه) described it as follows:

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) commanded Muslim women to pull this sheet on top of them to cover their bodies except one eye, when it is necessary for them to come out of their home. (Ibn Kathir)

Imam Mohammed Bin Sirin said, "When I asked ‘Ubaidah Salmani (رضي الله عنه) the meaning of this verse and how the Jalbab was to be used, he demonstrated it to me by pulling a sheet of cloth over his head to cover his body, leaving his left eye uncovered. This was also the explanation of the word *‘Alaihinna* in this verse."

This verse clearly requires hiding of the face which supports the commandments in the verse of Hijab.

The second phrase in this verse which requires interpretation is *Yudnina ‘Alaihinna.* ‘Allamah Alusi writes:

(The root word) *Adna* literally means to bring something closer. Here it means to hang something close to you, or over you, since it is followed by *‘Ala* in the phrase. In my opinion, *Adna* followed by *‘Ala* points towards covering

themselves with the sheet hanging on top of them in a way so that they can see the road as they walk (Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, vol. 22, pp. 88-89)

After quoting and discussing many interpretations, 'Allamah Alusi concludes:

All the above discussions deal with explaining the gist (of the term). The apparent meaning of the word *'Alaihinna* is clearly to cover one's body completely, although some have interpreted it to mean covering the head and the face, because in the olden Days of Ignorance, women usually left their faces uncovered.

HOW TO WRAP THE SHEET AROUND

Not only did the scholars of the Holy Qur'an clarify for us that, according to this verse, it is mandatory for women to wear Hijab and hide their faces, but they also explained exactly how the Jalbab should be worn. The greatest interpreter of the Holy Qur'an, Ibn 'Abbas (ﷺ), has been reported to have mentioned two ways of wearing Jalbab. The first one, where the sheet of cloth should be pulled over on top to cover the body with the exception of one eye, has been already mentioned above. The second method, which allows for keeping both eyes uncovered, has been reported by 'Allamah Alusi as follows:

Ibn Jarir and Ibn Al-Munzir described the method of wearing the Jalbab according to Ibn 'Abbas and Qatadah. The sheet should be wrapped from the top covering the forehead, then bringing one side of the sheet to cover the face below the eyes so that most of the face and the upper body is covered. This will leave both the eyes uncovered (which is acceptable under necessity). (Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, vol. 22, p. 89)

Many other scholars, such as Mohammed Bin Sirin, ‘Allamah Ibn Jarir, Imam Suddi, Imam Abubakr Jassas, Imam Wahidi, and ‘Allamah Ibn Sa‘d Mohammed Bin Ka‘b Kurazi, have described the use of Jalbab in more or less the same way as the two ways described by Ibn ‘Abbas (رضي الله عنه).

In addition to the scholars mentioned above, all interpreters of the Holy Qur'an, from the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) to the present day, have consistently adhered to the same interpretation of this verse, i.e., women are required to cover themselves when coming out of their homes and that hiding of the face is included in the Hijab. To quote all these scholars would make this document unnecessarily long, but following are some examples:

‘Allamah Ibn Jarir writes:

In this verse, Allah (﷾) is commanding the Prophet (ﷺ) to ask his wives, his daughters and to all Muslim women that they should not dress like slave girls leaving their heads and faces uncovered when they come out of their homes. Instead, they should cover themselves with a cloak covering their faces so that nobody will stand in their way and everyone will know that they are respectable folks. (Tafsir Ibn Jarir, vol. 22, p. 29)

‘Allamah Nishapuri writes:

In the early days of Islam, all women used to come out dressed in knee-length shirts and scarves as was the tradition in the former Days of Ignorance. There was no difference in the dresses of street women and those from respectable families. Then Allah (﷾) commanded (Muslim women) to cover their heads and faces so that people would differentiate them from the street women. (Ahkam-ul Qur'an, vol. 4, p. 354)

‘Allamah Abu Hayyan states:

The advantage in observing Hijab is that these women are recognized as pious and respectable. Thus, the perverts would not be after them and the women would not have to face unpleasantness. Nobody will dare follow and make advances to a woman who has completely concealed herself as opposed to the one who has come out nicely decorated without Hijab; the malicious and evil-minded folks will associate great hopes with such women. (Al-Bahr-ul Muhit, vol. 7, p. 250)

These quotations are taken from some of the well-known Interpreters of the Holy Qur'an. Otherwise, almost all the scholars of the Holy Qur'an have been interpreting this verse to include hiding of the face in the commandment of Hijab. It is also noteworthy that among these scholars are the followers of all the four schools of thought. Thus, regardless of whether they are Hanafi, Shaf‘i, Humbali or Maliki, all include hiding of the face in the commandment of Hijab without any disagreement.

And, this is not a theoretical matter. We find from the Ahadith and other narrations that all women, including the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), immediately implemented this commandment after the Revelation of this verse, and the use of Jalbab and Hijab by women quickly became the norm of the Muslim society. Actually, it was exemplary how readily the Muslim women obeyed and practiced it. Imam Abdul Razzaq narrated from Ummi Salamah (رضي الله عنها):

عن أم سلمه قالت لمانزل يدنين عليهن من جلا بيبهن خرج نساءالانصار
كان علي رؤوسهن الغربان من السكينه وعليهن اكسيه سوع يلبسنها
(روح المعاني، ج ٢٢، ص٨٩)

After the Revelation of this verse, the ladies of Ansar used to come out of their homes and walk with such dignity as if there were birds sitting on their heads (which would fly away if they walked any faster). And, they used to cover themselves with big black cloaks.

It should be noted here that the modern day Burqa‘ (which is used in some countries by Muslim women) also serves as Jalbab. It is this Hijab, customary among Muslim women since the beginning of Islam, which is now being abolished by those who have been influenced by the western thinking. To accomplish this, they interpret the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith according to their own desires thereby going astray themselves and leading others on the same path. May Allah (ﷻ) guide us and protect us from these mischiefs.

THE COMMANDMENT FOR PROTECTING GAZE AND HIDING ADORNMENT

Not only did Islam command women to stay home, to not talk to Ghair-Mahram men seductively, and to cover themselves with cloaks, it barricaded all those roads from where carnal excitement and bad thoughts may attack human beings. Thus, Allah (ﷻ) said (in the Holy Qur'an):

4.

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ه وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ
وَلا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إلا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلا
يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إلا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ
بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا
مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ

يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ
(النور، ٣١-٣٠)

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that will make for greater purity for them; and Allah (ﷻ) is well acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their fathers-in-law, their sons, their step sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O you Believers! Turn you all together towards Allah, that you may attain Bliss." (24:30-31)

Before going into the details of the commandments contained in the above two verses, it will be useful to know that the very first verse containing the commandments of Hijab was the one which was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, i.e., the verse 53 of Surah Ahzab which was revealed at the time of the wedding of Zainab Bint Jahash (رضي الله عنها) to the Prophet (ﷺ). Scholars have estimated that this verse was revealed in either the 3rd or 5th year of Hijrah. Imam Ibn Kathir and 'Allamah Shaukani believed it to be in the 5th year of Hijra. However, there has been a consensus among all scholars about this verse being the very first one related to the commandments of Hijab.

The above two verses of Surah Nur were revealed at the time of the incident of Ifk which occurred upon the return of the Prophet (ﷺ) from the battle of Bani Al-Mustaliq. This battle took place in the 6th year of Hijra, which tells us that these two verses were revealed after the verses of Surah Ahzab. Thus, the commandments of Hijab were implemented when the verses in Surah Ahzab were revealed (which was a year before the above two verses).

These verses further contain the following commandments:

1. LOWERING THE EYES (GHADD AL-BASAR):
The word Yaghuddu in the above verses comes from the root word Ghadd which means to lower, to regulate, to suppress (Mufaradat-ul Qur'an). To lower the eyes in this context means to turn away the eyes from everything forbidden (Tafsir Ibn Kathir). Included in this is looking at a woman with bad intentions and also looking at a woman with no specific intention. As well, it includes looking at those parts of the body of a man or woman which are defined as private (Satr). However, necessities such as medical treatment, are exempt from it. Similarly, to peek into people's houses and to use the eyes in seeing all such things that the religion has forbidden are included under this commandment.

2. GUARDING THE MODESTY (PRIVATE PARTS):
This implies restraining oneself from all forbidden means to satisfy one's sexual desires. Included in this are adultery, rape, masturbation, homosexuality, lesbianism, etc.

With a little analysis, it becomes clear that the intent in these verses is to stop people from all forbidden means of satisfying sexual desires. The beginning and the end points were clearly pointed out (i.e., looking at others with bad intentions and guarding the private parts), and everything in

between automatically became part of this commandment. The sexual excitement and mischief indeed begins from freely looking at the opposite sex, and its potential end is indulging in adultery and rape. In between these extremes are sexual fantasies, lewd talk, touching, fondling, etc. ‘Allamah Ibn Kathir quotes ‘Ubaidah (﵁):

كل ماعصى الله به كبيرة و قد ذكرالطرفن (تفسيرابن كثير)

“Everything which is in disobedience of Allah (ﷻ) is a major sin. In this verse, the beginning and the end point of this sin have been identified.” (Tafsir Ibn Kathir)

3. CONCEALING THE BEAUTY AND ORNAMENTS:

What does the word Zinat mean? Maulana Muhammad Idris Kandhalvi writes in the interpretation of this verse:

Zinat means beautification, whether it is natural such as face, hands and body, or artificial and intentional such as, clothes, jewelry and make-up. All of these form the apparent beauty of a woman and are included in the meaning of إلا ما ظهر منها. All of these things, therefore, should be concealed from everyone except the Maharim (those who have been exempted). These have been described in the next verse. The commandments in this verse are mainly related to women's Satr, i.e., an explanation of what parts of a woman's body and her beauty must be concealed from others. In the next verse, exceptions have been listed about the people in front of whom she does not have to observe these restrictions. These are twelve. (Ma‘arif-ul Qur'an)

Mufti Muhammad Shafi's interpretation of this verse reads:

In the beginning of this verse, women were asked not to reveal their beauty. In this part of the verse, they have been asked to conceal their natural beauty as well by covering it with their scarves. The purpose here was also to eradicate the tradition, which was prevalent in the Days of Ignorance, whereby women use to put their scarves on their heads with the sides hanging on the back. This left their ears, neck, collar, and chest exposed. Therefore, Muslim women were asked here not to wear their scarves in this manner, but to wrap the two sides of it closely on top of their chests covering all these parts of the body.

Next, those men are described with whom Hijab is not required. There are two reasons for these exceptions.

First, there is no danger of any mischief from these men, as they are the Maharim. By nature, these men are the protectors of their women's honour. Second, they live with these women in the same house which also dictates that they be exempted from these restrictions. It is also important to remember that with the exception of the husband, Satr must be observed with the rest of these Maharim men. Exposing of Satr, which is not permissible even in Salat, is forbidden with the Maharim as well.

Eight Maharim and four other kinds of men have been exempted in this verse from the commandment of Hijab. Seven of these Maharim were mentioned before in the verse of Hijab in Surah Ahzab. Five other exceptions were mentioned in this verse.
It should also be kept in mind that the word Mahram has been used here in its common meaning and includes the husband. The interpretation of Mahram by the scholars, which means "a man with whom marriage is forbidden," is not meant here.

Husband: A wife is not required to observe Hijab of any part of her body with her husband. However, to look at the private parts unnecessarily is not preferable. ‘Aishah (ﷺ) stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) never looked at her private parts nor did she look at his.

Father: The grandfather and the great grand- father are also included in this category.

Father-in-Law: The grand father-in-law and the great grandfather-in-law are included here as well.

Sons: The real sons.

Step-sons.

Real and step-brothers. However, cousin brothers, all of whom are considered Ghair-Mahram, are not included in this category.

Sons of the real or step brothers.

Sons of real and step sisters. Cousin Sisters are not included in here.

The above are the eight kinds of Maharim.

Women: Hijab does not need to be observed with other Muslim women either, but Satr cannot be exposed to them as well. However, for the purpose of medical treatment, it is permissible.

Their women attendants or servants: According to the majority of scholars, male servants are not included in this category. Hijab must be observed with male servants in the same way as with other Ghair-Mahram men.

Men who have no interest or desire for women: These are the men who, because of their mental or physical condition, have no interest or desire left in them for the opposite sex.

Immature children: Those who have not reached puberty and have not developed an interest or knowledge of the specific matters related to sex and women. Those children who have such knowledge and interest, regardless of their age, will not be included in this category.

4. CONCEALING THE SOUND: The fourth important issue that has been discussed in this verse pertains to the sound. Women have been asked not to walk with a heavy foot so as to draw attention of men through the sounds of their jewelry.

According to this, to attach any such things to the jewelry which make noise, or to wear jewelry on top of each other producing noise, or to walk in a way so as to create noise of the jewelry which may be heard by Ghair-Mahram men, are all forbidden.

From this verse, many jurists have inferred that if it is forbidden to have the Ghair-Mahram men hear the sounds made by pieces of jewelry, it is certainly forbidden for Ghair-Mahram men to hear the voice of women. That is why these jurists have included the voice of a woman in the definition of Satr.

Now whether the voice of a woman in itself is a part of her Satr is a controversial issue. Imam Shaf'i has not included it in the definition of Satr for women. There is a difference of opinion among the followers of Imam Abu Hanifah. Ibn Hammam has included it in Satr which is why it is not preferable for a woman to call Adhan. However, it is evident from Ahadith that the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke with

the Ghair-Mahram men from behind a curtain even after the Revelation of the verse of Hijab. From all of this, it seems that where it has the potential to create Fitnah (mischief) for both the men and women, it is forbidden. Where there is no such likelihood, it is permissible for a woman to speak with a Ghair-Mahram man. To be on the safe side though, it is preferable that women don't talk to Ghair-Mahram men unnecessarily.

Imam Jassas, in the interpretation of this verse, wrote:

When Allah (﷾) has included the sounds of jewelry worn by a woman in the expression of her beauty, it would also be forbidden for a woman to wear colourful and decorated outer garments (like a Jalbab or Burqa‘, when she is among the Ghair-Mahram men).

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ "And O you Believers, turn you all together towards Allah, so that you may attain Bliss." After commanding men to lower their gaze and women to observe Hijab with Ghair-Mahram men, Allah (﷾) instructed all men and women to turn to Him for forgiveness for their shortcomings, and to make a firm determination not to disobey Allah (﷾) again. (Ma‘arif-ul Qur'an, vol. 6, p. 394)

A DANGEROUS MISUNDERSTANDING

In fact, all the above commands in these verses of Surah Nur are intended to prevent adultery and rape. Thus, these commands provide the best preventative strategies and treatment for the protection of men's and women's honour. Also, these commands are unsurpassable for shaping character and cleansing the inner self (Tazkiyah-i-Batin).

However, those whose eyes are blinded with the veil of sexual excitement and hunger are not able to see the beauty of these verses. These lovers of western values and prisoners of their own carnal desires, who wish to do away with these commands of maintaining the honour, try to present the meaning of the phrase, "Except what is apparent outwardly (or what must appear ordinarily)," in this verse in a way that suits their purpose. They claim that since some of the Companions and their followers have been reported to interpret this phrase as meaning the face and hands, it is, therefore, all right for women to roam around publicly with their faces uncovered. This is a misunderstanding which is being promoted for the sheer purpose of following the western values and obtaining freedom from the dictates of the religion.

As it has been explained before, the phrase, "Except what is apparent outwardly," is meant to clarify that a woman is allowed to expose her face and hands because some needs and circumstances necessitate it. It does not talk about those needs and circumstances. The next part of this verse, beginning with, "They should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except....," describes the limits and boundaries of when and in front of whom may a woman expose her face and hands. It clearly states that women are not to expose their face and hands except in front of Maharim men.

Besides, if a woman's face and hands were exempt from the command of concealing her beauty and ornaments, then why was it necessary to list, in the next part of the verse, those people in front of whom she could expose her face and hands? The fact is that the verse, "They should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof," deals with the unexposable parts of a woman's body (Satr) and not with Hijab. The next part of the verse talks about Hijab and the people in front of whom

she can come freely with her face and hands exposed, i.e., without Hijab. Thus, the commentators of the Holy Qur'an, such as, Ibn ‘Abbas, Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir, have interpreted the verse accordingly. Ibn Kathir, for example, writes:

In this verse, Allah (ﷻ) listed the Maharim of a woman and said that although she could expose her beauty in front of these Maharim, but in doing so the intent must not be to show off her adornment. (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 3, p. 284)

Secondly, if women were allowed to go freely with their faces exposed in front of everyone, why was it necessary to command them to guard their eyes (Ghadd Al-Basar) - و قل وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ "And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze"?

Third, if it was permissible for women to go freely in front of anyone with their faces exposed, why did Allah (ﷻ) commanded in Surah Nur to seek permission before entering a household. يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْنِسُوا "O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission....." (24:27)

Fourth, Allah (ﷻ) commanded women: وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الأولَى "And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance." If women could go around freely with their faces exposed, why was this command necessary?

Fifth, Allah (ﷻ) also commanded: الْحَقِّ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ "And when you ask (his wives) for anything you need, ask them from behind a screen; that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for

theirs." (Surah Ahzab, v. 53) So, we find out that asking them from behind a screen maintains the purity of hearts and talking to them without any screen may cause contamination of hearts.

Sixth, even if a woman needs to talk to a man from behind a screen, she has been commanded to: فَلا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلا مَعْرُوفًا "Be not too complaisant of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire." (Ibid. v. 32) If it was permissible for a woman to go freely in front of men, what was the need for this command?

Seventh, Allah (ﷻ) also commanded women: وَلا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ "And that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments" (Surah Nur, v. 31), because if their attention was drawn to them, it may excite their desires creating the possibility of Fitnah.

Now, in the light of all of the above, who, in their right mind, would claim that Islamic Shari‘ah which has attempted to close all possible ways to lewdness and sexual excitement and freedom, will permit women to go freely in front of all with their faces exposed, thereby reopening all those paths again?

SEEKING PERMISSION BEFORE ENTERING A HOUSE

With respect to Hijab, Islamic Shari‘ah also commanded not to enter each other's houses without seeking permission in order to preserve the privacy and sanctity of the household. Allah (ﷻ) says:

5.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ (النور: ٢٧)

"O you who believe! do not enter houses other than your own until you have asked permission and saluted the dwellers therein; that is best for you, (Allah (ﷻ) admonishes you) so that you may heed." (24:27)

One of the major reasons for the above commandment is also to ensure that the ladies of the house may move to the inner quarters of the house before a Ghair-Mahram stranger walks in.

FOR ELDERLY WOMEN

For elderly women, who no longer have sexual desires or the attraction, there is, however, some concession made in these requirements. Allah (ﷻ) says:

6.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنْكُمُ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلاثَ مَرَّاتٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِنَ الظَّهِيرَةِ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ صَلاةِ الْعِشَاءِ ثَلاثُ عَوْرَاتٍ لَكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَهُنَّ طَوَّافُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ه وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الأَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَأْذِنُوا كَمَا اسْتَأْذَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ه وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ اللاتِي لا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ وَأَنْ يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ه (النور، ٦٠–٥٨)

“O you who believe! Let those whom your right hands possess and the (children) among you who have not come of age ask your permission (before they come to your presence) on three occasions: before the Fajr prayer, the time when you remove your clothes for the noonday heat, and after the Isha prayer; these are your three times of undress; outside those times it is not wrong for you, or for them, to move about attending to each other; thus does Allah (﷾) make clear the Signs to you; for Allah (﷾) is Full of Knowledge and Wisdom.”

“But when the children among you come of age let them (also) ask for permission as do those senior to them (in age); thus does Allah (﷾) make clear His Signs to you; for Allah (﷾) is Full of Knowledge and Wisdom.”

“Such elderly women as are past the prospect of marriage, there is no blame on them if they lay aside their (outer) garments provided they make not a wilful display of their beauty, but it is best for them to be modest, and Allah (﷾) is the One Who sees and knows all things.” (24:58-60)

The first two verses above allow small children and slaves to move about freely in the house with the exception of the specified times. Thus, women are also free to be around them without their outer robes.

The third verse provides concession for such elderly women who no longer have any desire for marriage or attraction for men, and who can, therefore, take off their outer garments (Burqa‘, Hijab, robes, etc.) in front of men other than Maharim provided that they do not display their make-up. Although the concession was granted, it was reminded that the preferable thing to do is to be modest.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, all the verses mentioned above from the Holy Qur'an may be summarized as follows:

1. Women should not leave their homes unless it is absolutely necessary.

2. If they must leave their home, they should wrap themselves in outer cloaks (Burqa‘ or Jalbab) so as not to expose any part of their bodies.

3. Men and women should not look at each other without utmost necessity.

4. If men need to talk to women, they should do so from behind a screen (curtain).

5. When women need to talk to men, they should do so from behind a screen and not speak in a pleasant and overly friendly manner.

6. Women may keep their face, hands, and feet uncovered in front of Maharim normally, but they should not display the rest of their body parts and should maintain the requirements of Satr all the time.